Similarly, the frescoes of Sūmarra, painted between A.D. 836 and 883, suggest the workmanship of Christian painters, not only because of the Christian priests which form the subject of the design, but also because of the signatures of the artist.  

To such Christian painters are probably also ultimately to be traced the illustrations in thirteenth-century manuscripts of Kallīlā wa Dimnāb and of the Muqāmāt of Ḥarīrī. The group of stories which is embodied in the first of these two has probably had a wider circulation and has been translated into more languages than any other work of secular literature in the ancient world; it was known to Christian readers nearly two centuries before it passed into the literature of the Muhammadan world, for it was translated into Syriac about A.D. 570 by a Nestorian ecclesiastic, whereas the first Arabic translation was not made until 730 by Ibn al-Muqaffā’. From this Arabic text a later Syriac version was made by another Nestorian priest either in the tenth or eleventh century. This collection of stories had therefore been well known in Christian circles for a long time before their Muhammadan rulers wanted to have it illustrated. The other book, though the work of a Muhammadan writer who was at pains to vindicate his orthodoxy, was likewise a collection of stories, mostly of a frivolous character, and capable of attracting educated Christian readers as much as Muslims. For the illustration of both of these books, therefore, Christian artists might well have been employed, without prejudice to their faith, and their artistic conventions and illustrative methods might well have passed on to such of their descendants as entered the pale of Islam, or even to such Muslims who themselves cared to adopt the profession of the painter. The artistic style would remain unaffected by change of faith. These pictures have often been described as belonging to the Baghdad or to the Mesopotamian school, but such a geographical designation has scanty warrant and fails to recognize the distinctive character of the style of painting. A comparison of them with illustrations in the service books of the Nestorian and the Jacobite Church reveals the existence of a number of common features. In the first place, mention may be made of a curious convention, which occurs in the Schefer MS. of Ḥarīrī, of indicating the outline of the nose by a prominent line of white paint; the same convention occurs also in a copy of the Gospels in Arabic in the British Museum (Add. 11850, fol. 91 b). In a Lectionary of the Jacobite Church, probably written in the thirteenth century (B.M., Add. 7170, fol. 145), there is a picture of Christ before Pilate, in which there

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1 E. Herzfeld, Die Malereien von Samarra, p. 91.  
2 Bibliothèque Nationale, Arabe 1847.
As regards carpets, a Christian origin may with some degree of certainty be claimed for the so-called carpets of Hira—once a city with a large population of Nestorian Christians—on which were woven patterns of elephants, horses, camels, lions, and birds. Another form of artistic activity may also very possibly have been in part at least the creation of Christian workmen, namely, the paintings on the pottery of Rayy, which in the tenth century was said to have been the finest city in the whole East, with the exception of Baghdad. Like the capital, it probably contained a considerable Christian population; it was at one time the seat of a Nestorian metropolitan, but in the eleventh century it was for purposes of ecclesiastical administration joined to Hulwân, and after 1175 to the metropolitan see of Hamadân, which was much nearer to Rayy. The abundant output of the pottery of Rayy, with its figured decoration of princes, knights, singing-girls, dancers, and musicians, at a period when orthodox Muslim opinion was so powerful and there is little evidence of the existence of any Muhammadan artist engaged in painting figures, makes it difficult to ascribe these charming designs to the workmanship of any follower of the faith of Islam. On the other hand, there are striking points of likeness between the figured decoration of the pottery of Rayy and the illustrations of the manuscripts of the Maqâmât of Harîrî, for which a Christian origin has been claimed above.

There is still another possible source of artistic influence that may have offered its contribution to the beginnings of Muhammadan painting, namely, the heathen city of Harrân, in Mesopotamia, between Edessa and Ra‘is ‘Ayn. Here was an ancient temple of the moon-god, which had received the patronage of the Assyrian kings, but the immigration of a number of Macedonian and Greek settlers caused the primitive polytheism of the city to take on a Greek veneration, and the deities worshipped there accordingly received Greek names. Up to the Muslim period, the inhabitants retained a mixture of Babylonian and Hellenic religion, and they specially cultivated the worship of the planets. When, under the Abbasid Caliphate, the desire to acquire the learning of the Greeks stimulated the work of translation, it was the pagans of Harrân who showed special activity in transmitting to the Muslims the treasures of Greek wisdom which they had so long assiduously cherished. Special attention had been given in Harrân to mathematical and astronomical studies, and from these were probably derived the figured representations of the heavenly constellations, which are among the earliest examples of pictorial art in the Muhammadan period that have survived to us. Whether the pagans of Harrân cultivated the art of painting in any other form is unknown, but it is more than likely that they cherished this legacy from classical culture along with other arts.

Another source is undoubtedly the art of the Manichaens, and of this our knowledge is more ample. This religion, which had so remarkable an expansion not only in the East but also along the coast of North Africa and the south of Europe, and withstood for centuries the utmost severity of persecution by Sassanian Zoroastrians, and by Christian and Muhammadan governments, all of whom endeavoured by every possible means to extirpate it, cultivated the art of painting as a recognized means of religious instruction. Its founder, Manî, who was put to death by the Persian king Bahram about A.D. 274, was himself a painter and had illustrated his own writings with coloured pictures. His followers enjoyed some respite from persecution for a few generations after the Arab conquest of Persia, and during this period appear to have won a considerable number of adherents to their own faith under Muhammadan rule; but towards the latter part of the eighth century they were again exposed to fierce persecution, and in the reign of Muqtadir (908–932) most of them took refuge in Khurasan, so that by the middle of the tenth century only three hundred Manichaens were left in Baghdad. The importance that the Manichaens attached to the art of painting must have led to the establishment of an active school of painters, who may well have been willing to work for such Muhammadan patrons as cated to employ them. The richly decorated bindings of their religious books attracted the attention even of their theological opponents, both Christian and Muhammadan, and the lavishness of the expenditure upon these works of art may be judged from the fact that when in the year A.D. 923 fourteen sacks full of Manichaean books were burnt in Baghdad, trickles of silver and gold ran out from the fire. What the Manichaean paintings were like remained quite unknown until Professor von Le Coq in 1904 discovered some Manichaean manuscripts with pictures, and some frescoes on the walls of what had once been a Manichaean temple, in a ruined city near Turfan. Both in colouring and design these paintings suggest analogies with the work of later Persian painters, and it may be conjectured that the descendants of the Manichaean painters left behind in Muhammadan territory when the main body of the persecuted sect moved eastward, to spread their doctrines among the Uighurs of Central Asia, carried on for new masters the traditional methods of their...
survived, with the exception of the frescoes recently discovered at Küh-i-Khwājah by Sir Aurel Stein and those found at Bāmiyān in Afghanistan by M. Hackin, but there are several literary records that bear evidence to the cultivation of pictorial art. According to the poet al-Buhtūrī (ob. A.D. 897), some of the original paintings in the palace of the Sasanian kings in Ctesiphon still survived up to his time; he describes one that represented the fighting between the Persians and the Romans at the siege of Antioch by Khusrav Anūshirwān in A.D. 538, he even mentions the colours used—green, yellow, and red—the warriors, some charging with their spears, others protecting themselves with their shields, appear to him so life-like that he cannot believe that they are merely pictured until he feels them with his hands.  

Mas'ūdī speaks of a history of the kings of Persia, which he had seen in the year A.D. 915 in the possession of a noble Persian family in the city of Iṣṭāḫr, near the site of the ancient capital, Persepolis; it contained pictures of each of the Sasanian kings as he appeared at the time of death, with his crown upon his head and attired in his royal robes. About the middle of the tenth century, a geographer named Abū Iṣḥāq al-Fārisī, commonly known as Iṣṭakhrī, describes a similar manuscript, which he had seen in the castle of Shīz, in the north of Persia, near one of the most famous fire-temples of the Zoroastrians. The traditions of Sasanian pictorial art were probably preserved among those Persians who remained true to the faith of their fathers, and might in consequence of the strong national sentiment that continued to animate this race continue to receive encouragement even among those who had accepted the faith of the conquerors. Of the rock-cut sculptures and silver-work of the Sasanian period, enough has escaped destruction to show what the motifs and characteristics of Sasanian art were. These reappear on the paintings of Sāmarrā in the ninth century, in which we find not only such an arrangement of figure-decoration as is presented in Sasanian art, but also the same types of face, both of men and women, and a similar costume and disposition of the fields of drapery; and dancing-girls and female musicians correspond to the earlier convention, and the numerous animals can be traced back to the same source. In the Persian miniatures of a later date similar survivals can be recognized. The fact that the Muslim Persian painters took the subject-matter of their romances, just as Firdawsī did for his Šah Nāmeh, from the legendary history of their early kings before the Arab conquest, testifies to the vitality of their national traditions.

1. dhīqān, pp. 108-9 (Constantinople, A.D. 1150).
3. E. Herzfeld, De Malerei von Samarrā, pp. 105-7 et passim.
and in a similar spirit the illustrators of such manuscripts were naturally influenced by the work of their predecessors. Such hunting scenes as those depicted in the sculptures of Tāq-i-Bustān, near Kirmānšāh, in which Khusrau Parviz (590–628) hunts the stag and the wild boar, constantly reappear in Persian paintings, after an interval of seven or eight centuries. Especially in the representation of certain favourite incidents, these painters followed the traditional manner of the earlier artists in Sasanian times, e. g. when they depicted Bahram Gur, seated on his throne with his two lions before him, or exhibiting his skill in shooting the deer, accompanied by his favourite luteist, who afterwards performs the feat of carrying an ox on her back up a flight of stairs; in one of the palaces of Samarra Professor Hessesfeld found a painting of this last incident, which is entirely Sasanian in character.1 Another favourite picture in later Persian art which can be traced back to Sasanian times is that of Kai Kā'ūs being lifted towards heaven by eagles, which fly up in their efforts to reach the lumps of flesh attached to the upper part of his car. Besides such representations of the heroes of Persian national history, there are a number of details of costume—helmets, armour, long streamers, &c.—which reproduce in the miniatures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries similar features of Sasanian silver-work of the seventh century.

But it is not only in paintings that the traditions of Sasanian art have been preserved, for it is well known that the Persians applied their skill in pictorial design to the weaving of carpets also. One of the earliest descriptions of such a carpet is recorded on the occasion of the sack of the palace of the Persian king in Cretephon by the Arabs in 637. It is said to have been made of silk, decorated with gold and silver, with pearls and precious stones; the design represented a garden in spring-time, intersected with paths and runnels of water, and filled with fields of flowers and trees whose fruits were made of jewels.2 The tradition of such a design seems never to have been lost by the carpet-weavers of Persia, and this great garden-carpet of Khusrau was the prototype of the later carpets of a similar design, made in the Muhammadan era and now preserved in Vienna and elsewhere, though none other ever approached the same degree of elaboration and costliness. The oldest of such carpets with pictorial designs, still preserved, does not go back to a date before the sixteenth century; but there are occasional historical records of carpets of an earlier period in the Muhammadan era, such as that which is said to have stirred feelings of self-reproach in the mind of Muntasir, who was Caliph for less than six months in A.D. 862 after having compassed


VIII. Examples of similar types in Christian and Muslim MSS.
IX. Examples of similar types in Christian and Muslim MSS.
the death of his father Mutawakkil; he had some carpets brought out of his father’s treasury for a convivial gathering and saw on one of them the figure of a Persian with a crown on his head and round it a Persian inscription; the Caliph sent for a man who could read Persian and he translated the writing as follows: ‘I am Shīrūyāh, the son of Khusrāw, the son of Hurmuz; I slew my father, but did not enjoy the sovereignty for more than six months.’ Whereupon Montaṣir changed colour and ordered the carpet to be burnt. On such carpets the early Sasanian hunting scenes reappear, with galloping horsemen and wild beasts fleeing from their arrows; another motif also occurs on these carpets, one that has a long history, going back to a period much earlier than that of the Sasanians, namely, the lion leaping on to the back of a deer and burying its teeth in the shoulder of the unfortunate beast, lying crushed under its weight. This motif occurs frequently in the decorative margins of Persian manuscripts also.

More hard to determine are the exact nature and limits of the influence exercised by Chinese art on Muslim painting, and this problem has formed the subject of much violent controversy. Commercial relations between China and the Arab empire began at an early period; during the first century of the Tang dynasty (620–720), vessels from China used to put in at the port of Siraf, on the east coast of the Persian Gulf, and exchanged their merchandise for goods from Basrah, Oman, and other parts. In the first half of the ninth century they began to come more rarely, but the Arab vessels went more frequently to China. The objects of Chinese art imported into Muslim territories undoubtedly served as models for imitation. Professor Sarre, in his explorations at Samarra, not only found specimens of Chinese pottery, but also local imitations of the same ware; and for the historical reasons set forth above, none of these can be later than the year 883. A cultural influence of still greater importance and of far-reaching result was the introduction of the art of making paper, which is said to have been taught to the people of Samarqand for the first time in Muslim history by a Chinaman, who had been brought there as a prisoner of war by the governor of that city, Ziyād ibn Sallīḥ, who died in 752.

When the Muslims first came to have any knowledge of Chinese paintings is uncertain. The record of the activity of the Chinese artists who illustrated

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1. Nūrūz, Tā’rīkh al-Khawāṣṣ, p. 143 (Cairo, 1888).
4. p. 51.
the poems of Rūdāni for the Sāmānid prince, Naṣīr ibn Ahmad, about A.D. 920, is an isolated phenomenon in the history of oriental art, and it is impossible to assert with any degree of certainty whether or not these paintings exercised any influence on the course of the later development of Muslim pictorial art, because no examples have survived from that period or from any of the succeeding centuries until after the lapse of three hundred years, and what we get then are the illustrated MSS. of the Maqāmāt of Hariri, which (as pointed out above) are connected with the tradition of Hellenistic art, and from the circumstances of the case were unlikely to admit any foreign influences. In this matter, as in so many others, it appears therefore impossible to prove a negative. The more important fact is the profound impression which Chinese painting made upon the greatest exponents of Muslim art, the Persians, for it became a commonplace in Persian literature to express admiration for artistic skill by a comparison with that of the Chinese. What knowledge they actually had of Chinese painting we do not know, but the language with which Tha‘alibī (961–1038) praises the skill of the Chinese artists suggests either personal acquaintance with their work, or information derived from some one who had seen it; a Chinese painter, he says, can represent a man with such fidelity to nature as to make him seem to be breathing; and not content with this, the painter can represent a man as laughing, and even all possible varieties of laughing, each in its own peculiar way. But what Chinese painting really meant to the Persians in this early period before the Mongol conquest we have no means of ascertaining. Nizāmī, who might have enlightened us on this matter, when he wrote his famous account of the trial of skill between the Rūmī and the Chīnī painter, leaves us unfortunately in the dark as to the real artistic characteristics of these rival schools of painting. But as any mention of painters and their work is so exceedingly rare in the literature of this early period, and as this contest between the two painters has often been referred to, but has hitherto not been translated into English, it is here given in full. It occurs in the poem ‘romance’ of the

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Explanatory notes:

1 See p. 146.

2 It may even make Poetfaris’s wife send for a Chinese painter to make pictures of herself and Joseph (Yīn wā Za kháh, ed. Rötsch, p. 112, Wien, 1834).

3 Ch. al., p. 127.

4 The geographical position of Rūm is as determinate as that of Chīn; it may mean Rome itself (i.e. New Rome, Constantinople), or the land of the Romans, i.e. Christians generally, whether Greeks or Latins, or it may mean Asia Minor, which at the time of Nizāmī was under the rule of the Seljūq Turks. In the present instance it may be taken to mean Western, while Chīn may mean little more than Eastern, for Chīn was used not only to indicate China proper, but also what is now known as Chinese Turkistan, or more vaguely the country to the east of Northern Persia.

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The Origins of Painting in the Muslim World

One happy day, the brightest of the spring, The Lord of China was Sīkandar’s guest. Wine banished care from every beclouded face Of men from Rūm, Irag, and Chīn and Zang. As wine and gladness loosened the pearls of speech, The talk went round with—Who should bear the palm For skill, among the craftsmen of the world? What rare attainment could each country show, And which the art wherein it did excel? One praised the land of Ind, for magic lore: Another, Babylon’s wise sorceries, Whose spells have power to curb all evil fate. ‘The finest singers come from Khurāsān,’ Said one, ‘and ‘Irāq sends the sweetest lutes.’ So each, as best he could, set forth his case. At length, it was agreed, as test of skill, To hang a curtain from a lofty dome, In such a manner that on either half Two painters should essay their skill, unseen. This vault should show the Rūmī’s work of art, While on the other the Chīnān should paint; Neither should look upon his rival’s work, Until the hour of final judgement came; Not till their work was done, should any draw The curtain that was hung between them twain. Then the beholders would adjudge the prize, And weigh the merits of the finished work. So, still in secret did the painters strive Each in his vaulted contour of the dome, Until, their task complete, they drew aside The curtain that concealed each masterpiece; But—strange to see!—no difference was found Between the two, in colour or in form. Such likeness filled the spectators with amaze, And none knew how to make the riddle plain. How had it happened that here these limner twins Could make two pictures, of the same design? The King between the pictures sat him down, And scrutinized with care, now this, now that, But not a whit of difference could he trace, Or find solution of the mystery. He gazed and gazed, but still no clue appeared; The likeness stayed mysterious as before.
THE ORIGINS OF PAINTING IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

Between the years 1415 and 1419, and the importance of these relations in their connexion with the history of Persian painting is emphasized by the fact that among the ambassadors sent from Harāt to the Emperor of China was a painter named Ghīyāḥ ad-Dīn, who received instructions from Shāh Rukh to record all the facts of interest that he might meet with on his journey.¹

This lively interest in Chinese painting continued to find expression in literature, and left permanent traces on Persian painting and on the Indian painting which copied it. For the literary references two examples may suffice: a geographer, Ibn al-Wardī, about the middle of the fifteenth century, enumerates among the arts in which the Chinese excelled their porcelain and pottery, their carved figures, their marvellous paintings and drawings of trees, animals, birds, flowers, fruits, and human beings in various situations and shapes and forms, so that they lacked nothing except soul and speech;² in the latter part of the same century, in a Persian translation of Kādīlah wa Dinnaḥ, the skill of a painter is described as being so marvellous that ‘when his brush drew faces, the souls of the painters of China were bewildered in the valley of amazement, and through the genius of his colouring the hearts of the artists of Khurāṣān were overwhelmed in the desert of bewilderment’.³

While mention is made in these and similar passages of the painters of China only, the loose use of this word makes it possible to include the eastern territories of Turkestan and the neighbouring country bordering on China. The discoveries of Sir Aurel Stein in the Taklamakan Desert, of Professor von Le Coq in Turfan, and of other explorers in these regions, have revealed the existence of a pictorial art that had been cultivated over a long period of many centuries in the territories lying between the eastern borders of Muhammadan principalities and the empire of China. In this art Buddhists, Christians, and Manichaens took part, and the receptiveness of these painters to influences both from the East—from China—and from the West, as exhibited in affinities with the traditions of Hellenistic art transmitted through that of the Oriental Churches—and also from India, illustrates the active interchange of artistic conventions which was taking place in Central Asia during the Middle Ages.

Accordingly, whether directly from China or from some country nearer the Persian border, the Persian painters, and after them the Indians, adopted certain conventions which became permanent characteristics of their pictorial art. Among these was the flame-halo, which they borrowed from Chinese and Central Asian statues of Buddha; the fantastic dragons, of which the

With the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century the intrusion of Chinese influences becomes clearer; the conquerors carried along with them to the West Chinese artists, and a Chinese monk who travelled through Central Asia to Persia in the years 1221 to 1224, speaking of Samarqand, wrote, ‘Chinese workmen are living everywhere’.⁴

The creation of a great empire, which brought Persia and China under a single administration and facilitated communications to a degree hitherto unknown in the history of either country, was not without its influence in the domain of art. Even after Persia attained a separate political status, the connexion with China was still maintained by means of diplomatic relations. Timūr (1369–1404) sent as many as three embassies to the Emperor of China, and his son, Shāh Rukh (1404–1447), maintained still more active relations with the court of China and received Chinese envoys in his court three times.

³ Nuzhat al-šiḥāb, p. 168 (Cairo, 1904).
⁴ i.e. China.
⁵ A'amīr-i-Shahīd, ed. J. W. J. Ouseley, p. 185 (II. 18–39) (Hertford, 1851).
Chinese painters were so fond, and other animal and bird forms of an imaginative character; and the Chinese 'Tai' or cloud form, with its sinuous, undulating shape, which may be found in Persian paintings even when no other trace of Chinese influence is recognizable.

It appears, therefore, that the chief sources from which Muhammadan painting derived its origin were the schools of Christian, Sasanian, and Manichaean painters that had been working long before the rise of Islam; and Chinese influence was superadded at a later period. Since, therefore, Islam did not itself stimulate the rise and development of any distinctive school of painting, any examples of pictorial art, in its earliest manifestations at least, were necessarily foreign to this faith, and can in most cases be traced to the artistic genius of one or other of the countries conquered by the Arabs and incorporated in the Muslim empire, or in later periods to influences brought in from nations with whose culture the Muhammadans came in contact through commercial or political conditions.

IV

THE PAINTERS AND THEIR MANNER OF WORKING

ANY account of most of the schools of painting in Christian Europe (with the exception of the Primitives) comprises more or less ample biographies of the painters concerned, and a detailed description of the various works attributed to each. But for the painters of the Muhammadan world, biographical details are entirely lacking before the sixteenth century; the historian has ignored them, and in none of the great cities of Islam are to be found those accumulations of documents of local interest, such as have yielded up precious results to the patient and industrious research of the historians of Flemish and Italian art. Further, up to the same period most of the examples of the work of Muhammadan painters which have survived to us are anonymous. Isolated exceptions are the drawing of the horseman, found in Egypt, which forms part of the collection of papyri made by the Archduke Rainer, and bears the signature of the artist, Ābū Tamīm Ḥaydara, and dates from the tenth century;1 in the Schefer MS.;2 of the Māqāmat of al-Harīrī, dated 634 (= A.D. 1237), the copyist of which claims at the same time to have painted the pictures;3 in the same library a MS. (Arabic 2584) of Abū Ma'shar's treatise on the conjunctions of the stars contains drawings by a painter, Qanbar 'Alī Shīrāzī, about the middle of the thirteenth century. So far as Persian painters are concerned, Bihzād, who lived in the latter part of the fifteenth and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, appears to have been one of the first to add his signature to his paintings, and he used to conceal it in minute characters in some obscure part of the picture.4 The signature of one of his pupils, Maḥmūd, is written on a tambourine held by one of the female musicians.5 From the sixteenth century onwards the practice of signing pictures became more common, though it may with some assurance be asserted that the majority of Persian paintings, even after that period, lack the signature of the artist. To this modesty or self-suppression, the enigmatical personality of Rīzā 'Abbāsī presents a notable exception; this artist was particularly fond of signing his name on his drawings; and not only does he give his name, but sometimes also the date and the circumstances under which he made the picture.

1 J. Karabacek, Papyri Erzherzog Rainer, Führer durch die Ausstellung, pp. 251-2 (Wien, 1894).
2 Bibliothèque Nationale (Arabic 1847).
3 Yāhūṣ ibn Maḥmūd ibn Yāhūṣ ibn Ābī l-Ḥasan ibn Khwawrānī al-Wāṣiti.
5 Bibliothèque Nationale (Supplément persan 1426, fol. 81 b).
The painters and their manner of working.

To reasons other than this vigorous self-assertiveness is to be assigned the contemporary practice in the atelier of the Mughal emperor in India of writing the names of the artists under the pictures in the manuscripts prepared for the library of the Emperor Akbar. These inscriptions are for the most part in the same handwriting, and appear to have been added by some functionary of the imperial library rather than by the painters themselves. It may be conjectured that we have here an indication of the personal interest which Akbar took in his court painters, for the account which Abu 'l-Fazl gives of them in his A'in-i Akbari, and his enumeration of their names, doubtless reflect the feelings of the emperor himself towards these masters of the pictorial art, whose achievements he so highly valued; for we are told that their works were submitted to his inspection every week, and he granted rewards or increased their monthly salaries according to excellence of workmanship.

It is regrettable that the practice of signing pictures did not become general until shortly before the decline of the art of painting in the Muhammadan world. But even when the name has been given, in the majority of cases no information whatsoever is forthcoming as to the life and personality of the painter, and (as will be shown in Chapter X) the biographical notices of such painters as attracted the attention of the historian are meagre in the extreme. This neglect by the historian fits in with the common depreciatory attitude of the orthodox towards the painter's art. 1

We have as little certain knowledge of the way in which these painters worked, as we have of the details of their biographies. The most famous masters, who enjoyed the patronage of some monarch, must have worked in the royal atelier, in which the expensive materials they needed for their work were provided for them; the gold, which was so lavishly expended not only in the general decoration of illuminated manuscripts, but also in very many cases filled an important place in the colour scheme of the pictures themselves, was far too costly for a simple craftsman to acquire through his private resources; the lapis lazuli which formed the material out of which they made the marvellous blue which lends such lustre to their paintings, must have been worth almost its weight in gold, and other colours were probably equally beyond the reach of such scanty incomes as the painters enjoyed. Further, the highly polished hand-made paper, on which they painted their pictures, had to be provided for them out of the revenues of the monarch they served. The painters, therefore, were paid servants of the

2 As has been shown in Chapter I, Akbar and Mirghwând were exceptions to this general rule.
State, drawing such scanty salaries as befitted their low social status, and taking rank below the calligraphers and the gilders. We have the important evidence of Abu 'I-Fazl that the court painters of the Emperor Akbar received monthly salaries, and this relation of the artist—whether painter or other craftsman—to his patron, as a salaried servant, survived in India up to the nineteenth century; indeed, without such regular support and an ensured subsistence, the artist could not have produced such highly finished works of art, or have devoted such lengthy periods of time to the elaboration of the minute details of miniature painting. Work of this kind could not be done in a hurry, and the painter had to be kept alive while engaged on such laborious tasks. A manuscript of Anwār-i-Suhaylī (B.M., Add. 18579), illustrated for the most part by Akbar’s court painters, contains a picture (fol. 36) dated A.H. 1013; but as the date of the completion of the manuscript as given in the colophon is A.H. 1019, the painters must have had the work in hand for at least six years. Bernier (about the year 1663) saw in India a painting of the exploits of Akbar which had occupied the painter’s efforts for seven years. Mirzā Bābā, the chief painter of Ḥāfiz ʿAlī Khān, Shāh of Persia from 1797 to 1834, spent seventeen years on the picture and other decorations of the copy of this monarch’s Diwān, which was presented to the Prince Regent. The painters probably had to come daily, except for scanty holidays, to the royal atelier, situated in some building connected with the royal library within the precincts of the palace. Chardin, who spent ten years in Isfahan from 1666 to 1676, states that there were as many as thirty-two kārkhāhān (or ateliers) in various parts of the Shāh’s palace; he mentions only a few of these, such as the library, in which the binders worked, the great wardrobe, in which the robes of honour were made, and separate establishments for pipes, candles, and wine, &c. He says nothing about painters in the royal palace, and possibly there were none employed by Abbās II or Sulaymān I, who reigned at this period. But his contemporary, François Bernier, who was in Dīlūlī in 1663, mentions the atelier of the painters among the workshops in the vicinity of the royal palace, assigned to the embroiderers, goldsmiths, tailors, shoemakers, &c. This was during the reign of Aurangzeb, whose rigid adherence to the precepts of his faith made him unsympathetic to painters; but when any art-loving monarch cared to encourage painting, it may be seen from the terms of the warrant appoint-

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6 Travels in the Mogul Empire, p. 219.
ing Bihzād director of the royal library how vast could be the extent of such an establishment.1 The various members of the staff then included calligraphers, painters, gilders, margin-drawers, gold-mixers, gold-beaters, washers of lapiz lazuli, and others. That the calligraphers should have been placed at the head of the list, even in the warrant of appointment of a painter as his superintendent, is significant of the high respect with which their calling was regarded, as explained above.2 The painters are mentioned before the gilders (mutāhābbīn, or workers in gold), though there is reason to doubt whether this was always the order of estimation in which the two callings were held. It was quite a common practice for a painter, when he signed his name to a picture, to append the appellation mutāhābbīn (gilder), even when no gold at all may have been used in the picture—in place of the more exact description muqawwir (painter)—as though the former designation gave him a higher status.

Some conception of the extent of such an establishment may be formed from the arrangements made in the city of Tabriz by Rashid ad-Din, the great prime minister of two successive Mongol princes of the Ilkhan dynasty in Persia—Ghazān Khān (1295–1304) and Uljaiyu (1304–1316). Eight years before his death in 1318 he added a suburb to the city, called after his own name Bāb-i-Rashidī (the Rashidī quarter), and richly endowed it for learning; it provided accommodation for as many as six to seven thousand students; he bequeathed to it a library of 60,000 volumes of works on science, history, and poetry, including a thousand Qur’āns copied out by some of the most famous calligraphers. Fifty physicians were brought from India, China, Syria, and Egypt, each of whom was bound to give instruction to ten students, and allowances in kind and money were made to all of them. For the perpetuation of his own writings, which were numerous and dealt with theology, history, and a number of other subjects, he made special provision; all facilities were granted to any one who desired to copy them, and he assigned a separate sum from the endowment in order that two copies of each of his works, one in Arabic and one in Persian, might be made every year, and presented to one of the chief towns in the Muhammadan world. The copyists were to be carefully chosen and were to be provided with lodgings in the precincts of the library.3 The copy of his Jāmi‘at-Tawārīkh, or Universal History, referred to below,4 must have been one of the volumes thus provided, since it bears the date A.H. 714, four years before his death, and its abundant illustrations make it clear that painters also were among the recipients of Rashid ad-Din’s bounty, though there is no specific mention of them in his charter of endowment. But this elaborate establishment in the suburb of Bāb-i-Rashidī, which is said to have contained as many as 30,000 houses, 1,500 shops, and 24 caravansaries, did not long survive; after the murder of his son and successor in 1336, the whole of it was plundered and the revenues that had been assigned to it by Rashid ad-Din were confiscated by the State.5

Of similar establishments of a later date and of more importance in the history of Persian art, we have scantier information. The libraries of the Timurid princes must have been provided with a large staff of calligraphists and painters, but details appear to be lacking. One of them, Baysunghur (1399–1433), a son of Shah Rukh, it is said that forty calligraphists were constantly employed in his library, with Mawlawī Jā‘far Tabrizī at their head;6 his father’s establishment must, of course, have been much larger.

Sultan Husayn Mirzā, the patron of Bihzād and of the celebrated calligrapher Sulṭān ‘Ali Mashhādi, during his long reign of thirty-six years in Harāt from 1470 till his death in 1506, according to the evidence of Mirzā Ḥaydar (who was a child when this enlightened prince died), ‘encouraged all the arts and crafts of the world to such a degree that in every separate profession he produced an unsurpassed master’.7

The atelier of the Emperor Akbar must also have formed a vast establishment, but unfortunately, though his biographer gives us a certain number of details regarding the calligraphers and painters, he tells so little about it that he does not even mention in which of Akbar’s capitals it was situated, whether in Dihlī, Agra, Fathpur Sikrī, or Lahore. He mentions only 17 painters,8 though the names of as many as 143 painters have been found in the pages of the manuscripts prepared for Akbar’s library.

How such establishments of painters were organized we do not know. The diploma appointing Bihzād director of the Royal Library of Shah Ismā‘īl says nothing on the matter except that his orders were to be obeyed, and that the other functionaries of the State were to give due recognition to his position. But the study of such a MS. as the Jāmi‘at-Tawārīkh of Rashid ad-Din and the various MSS. from the Library of Akbar show that such a director was in much the same position as the founder of a school of

2 Dawlatshāhī, Ta’khirat e-Shāh, ed. E. G. Browne, p. 350.
3 Ta’rīkh-i-Rashidī, translated by E. Denison Ross, p. 193.
5 Translated in Appendix C.
6 E. G. Browne, A History of Persian Literature under Tahirid Domination, pp. 77–86.
7 Pp. 3–5.
8 Pp. 93–4.
painters in the cinquecento in Italy. It is certainly clear that he could impose his will on the painters who worked under his direction, for there is such a similarity in the draughtsmanship and colouring of the various pictures in any one of Akbar's MSS., that difference of name appears in the majority of cases to indicate but slight difference in style. The work of Farrukh Beg certainly stands apart from that of his fellow artists and exhibits closer affinities to the design and colour scheme of the Persian school; but the result is much the same whether a picture is painted by Mīdhū or Mukund or any other.

In the execution of such a work of art as one of the superb manuscripts made for the Safavid Sultan or for the Mughal Pādshāh, the calligraphist must first have completed his part of the task, after receiving instructions as to the gaps to be left for the insertion of pictures. This procedure is indicated by the large number of instances in which the pictures in a manuscript have only partially been completed and blank spaces still remain throughout the rest of the volume. In modern times the forger has not infrequently taken advantage of the incomplete state of such a manuscript, and the blank spaces left between lines of early calligraphy have been filled in with modern imitations of paintings of the same period as the text. The written pages appear then to have been handed over to the margin-drawer, and his contribution to the total result is likewise often imperfect, probably through sheer neglect or inadvertence. As he frequently cut his lines too deeply into the paper, his activities have in a very large number of cases brought about the ruin of fine manuscripts; the paper has split from end to end of the margin lines and the whole volume has had to be reset in fresh margins at some later period, often with the loss of valuable indications as to date and previous ownership, and in every instance with the destruction of the original character of the book. The skill and care with which these pages in their diminished size have been reset in new margins at some later date are, however, often deserving of the highest praise, the line of joinage being sometimes hardly recognizable, or being cleverly concealed by a newly drawn margin line.

For the reasons given above it would appear that the work of the painter came last; consequently, the illustrations of a manuscript frequently belong to a much later date than that of the calligraphy, and the colophon of the text gives by no means trustworthy evidence as to the date of the pictures. One of the most remarkable examples of variation in the date of the illustrations of a manuscript is found in the famous copy of the Khamsah of Nizāmī in the British Museum (Or. 2265), decorated by the court painters.
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of the Shâh Taḥmâsp (1524-1576); for some unknown reason they left blank spaces in three places (foll. 203 b, 213, and 223 b), and these were filled up a century later, in 1675, by Muḥammad Zamân, a painter, an account of whom will be given later.

As to the stipends assigned to the court painters or any special emoluments they may have received, no information appears to be forthcoming. There are no stories of extravagant gifts being bestowed upon them, as fell to the lot of the poets who won the favour of a generous monarch by some appropriate verses or flattering eulogy; nor does the annalist mention that the painter ever received such rich rewards as were occasionally bestowed upon the more appreciated calligrapher.

As already stated, Akbar’s painters were paid every month and received special rewards for excellence of workmanship; in Persia, according to Chardin, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, payments were made to the Shâh’s workmen only once a year, in the form of demand notes on the treasury. He adds some details as to the procedure of their employment, which was probably followed in the case of painters also: the artisan who wished to enter the royal service submitted a specimen of his workmanship to the head of the atelier concerned; if his work and the terms of service he proposed were approved, he was then taken to the superintendent of the palace, with whom the final decision appears to have rested, though this officer submitted the specimens of work to the Shâh, or might even arrange an interview for the artisan, after which the terms of his appointment were finally settled.

Dr. F. R. Martin states, on the authority of Mr. A. G. Ellis, that Shâh Taḥmâsp on one occasion declared that he was not sufficiently wealthy to monopolize Bihzâd’s services, and he therefore permitted the painter to accept private orders. But this statement must have been based on a misunderstanding, for Mr. Ellis assures me that he has no knowledge of Shâh Taḥmâsp ever having given expression to such an opinion.

But whatever may have been the financial condition of the painters who lived on the bounty of such great patrons of art as Sultan Ḥusayn Mirzâ, Shâh Taḥmâsp, and Akbar, or received such titles of honour from Jahângir as Marvel of the Age (Nâdîr az-Zamân), their condition in a later period, when they had to depend on occasional fees from private persons, was wretched indeed. Bernier, who travelled in India from 1659 till 1667 and was

5 Miniature Painting and Painting of Persia, pp. 47, 135 (n. 32).
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for a time physician to Prince Dārā Shikoh, describes the painters as 'contemned, treated with harshness, and inadequately remunerated for their labour'. Only those who were in the service of the emperor or of some powerful noble, and worked exclusively for their patron, could devote themselves seriously to their art; the others were only called in as occasion arose, and were grudgingly rewarded for their labour, and were fortunate if they did not receive a flogging as part payment.  


SUBJECT-MATTER OF ISLAMIC PAINTINGS

In view of the lack of biographical details, the student of Muhammadan painting before the fifteenth century has to devote his attention to such of the works of the anonymous painters as have survived the numerous forces of destruction. The majority of the artists of this earlier period appear to have been illustrators, and consequently their work is found in manuscripts, the text of which they undertook to illustrate, and it is not until a later period, when some historical records of painters had already become available, that separate pictures are found apart from a text to be illustrated. Within the pages of manuscripts, therefore, first Arabic and later Persian, we find the material that enables us to judge of the nature of the activity of most of the painters and of the subjects of their predilection.

The earliest works that the painters were called upon to illustrate were scientific treatises dealing with medicine, astronomy, and mechanics. The history of Arabian medicine shows that the conquerors derived their first knowledge of this science from their Christian subjects, who transmitted to them the tradition of Greek medicine, and when the period of translation began, about the middle of the eighth century, the works of Greek physicians were translated into Arabic, either through the intermediary of Syriac versions or directly from the Greek original.

One of the most productive of these translators was Ḫūnayn ibn Iṣḥāq, a Nestorian Christian of Ḥira, who afterwards became court physician to the Caliph in Baghdad. In this Abbasid capital, especially in the reign of Ma’mūn (813–833), an active group of translators made Greek learning of all kinds available. These translators, who worked in Baghdad, were for the most part Christians, and some of them were sent into Byzantine territory to collect Greek manuscripts; but another intellectual centre, a repository of Greek science, especially medicine, was the ancient city of Ḫanīf Shāpūr, in what is now the province of Kūḫūzstān in south-west Persia; it was in this city that Ḫānīf had been put to death, and possibly some of his followers still survived there up to the latter part of the eighth century, but the chief exponents of the great medical school there were Nestorian Christians. Another group of translators was provided by the city of Harran, between Edessa and Ra’s ‘Ayn; the majority of the population of this city remained pagan down to the thirteenth century, and kept alive some kind of worship of an Assyrian moon-god. The name Hellenopolis, given to it by some of
the Christian Fathers, bears testimony to the survival in it of pre-Christian Greek culture; and the great mathematician, Thābit ibn Qurrah (ab. 901), who was not only active as a translator from the Greek, but also as the author of independent works of his own, was a member of this strange heathen sect.

In most of the treatises on medicine there was naturally very little opportunity for the exercise of the artistic faculty, but there is evidence that in the kindred science of botany, Greek manuscripts of the work of Dioscorides were, at an early period, translated into Arabic. In 948 the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VIII, had sent a finely illustrated manuscript of Dioscorides to the Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman in Cordova, and among the manuscripts which the emissaries of al-Ma'mūn (813–833) brought to Baghdad from Byzantine territories may quite possibly have been a copy of Dioscorides containing the originals of the illustrations in the Arabic version that has survived to us.

Another early group of pictures is formed by the illustrations in treatises on mechanics, especially those dealing with water-clocks and similar mechanical toys (Plate XI), and many of these undoubtedly go back to Greek originals.3

An entirely different group of examples of the activity of Christians and other artists in the illustration of works of Arabic literature is found in manuscripts of Kalila wa Dimnah, the Arabic version of that cycle of Indian animal stories which, in the numerous languages into which it has been translated, has wandered over the greater part of the earth.4

The scientific treatises above referred to were of interest only to the small group of learned men capable of understanding them, and the treatises on mechanical toys were decorated for the use of princely patrons who wished to have such things made for the adornment of their palaces. But these animal stories, with their shrewd maxims and reflections upon the common circumstances of everyday life, made an appeal to a much wider circle of readers; and though, doubtless, copies may have been made in the libraries of Sultans and have been enriched with illustrations in a corresponding degree of magnificence, the illustrated manuscripts that have survived appear to have been prepared for the use of less exalted personages, for the execution of the drawings is generally rough and the paints used are not of the most costly character.

The artistic origin of the animals in these illustrations has not yet received adequate investigation, but they could probably be traced back to Bestiaries...

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3 E. Westermann und F. Hauser, Uber die Uberen im Verein der islamischen Kultur (Halle, 1943); id., Uber die Uberen und Tafelansicht nach al-Gazari und den Bend Mārū (Der Islam, Vol. VIII (1919)).
4 See p. 78.
decorated by adherents of some one or other of the oriental Churches. Crude as the drawing often is, there is a vigour and liveliness of representation which claims for them a higher place than can always be assigned to more carefully finished work; and the painter often enters into the spirit of the Buddhist original of the stories, which assigned to animals the intellectual characteristics of human beings, and the jackals, particularly, who in the exercise of their cunning outwit some heedless victim, are often depicted with a sense of humour which is singularly lacking throughout the greater part of the history of Muhammadan art.

The stories of *Kalila wa Dimnah* were of a non-Muslim origin, and their wide extension in almost every literary language gives evidence of their broad, human attractiveness. They could thus provide material for the artistic activity of a Christian painter though working for a Muhammadan patron. The case is not entirely the same with another widely read work of Arabic literature, in the manuscripts of which occur some of the earliest examples of Muhammadan painting that have survived to us. The *Magānāt* of Ḥarīrī, with its preciousness of style and load of erudition, could not make so popular an appeal as did *Kalila wa Dimnah*, but very quickly after its completion in the beginning of the twelfth century it achieved a great reputation as a masterpiece of fine writing, and though the author was an orthodox and pious Muslim the subject-matter of his work was such as to make its appeal almost as much to erudite Christian readers of Arabic as to the author’s co-religionists. At any rate, it is clear from a study of the pictures in the earliest illustrated copies of this work extant that the inspiration of them is to be found in Christian art, and that the artists were either themselves Christian or were copying Christian models, or were working on the lines of a tradition that can ultimately be traced back to Christian art.

In the case of the great Persian epic, the *Shah Nāma*, however, illustrated copies of which exist in large numbers, the artistic influences are derived from an entirely different source. The *Shah Nāma* is the national epic of the Persian people, and embodies the exploits of the great heroes of their ancient history; in compiling it, Firdawī made use of historical material that goes back to a date antecedent to that of the Arab conquest, and when the task of supplying illustrations for it was assigned to the painter it was but natural that he should look back to the same early source for his models. Though few memorials of it have survived, there is little doubt that during the Sasanian period there was a flourishing school of painting in Persia. Indeed there is reason to believe that from the fourth century onwards painting exercised a vitalizing influence upon the arts in Persia, and that the rock
sculptures, the metal-work, and the embroideries that have survived to us owed their subject-matter and their form of representation to the models provided for them by the painter.¹

Moreover, there is literary evidence to show that the Sasanian painters concerned themselves with such subject-matter of warfare and battle as fills the pages of theŠah Nāmah, and that examples of such Sasanian paintings were available to the earlier illustrators of theŠah Nāmah. From the period of the tenth century, at the close of which Firdawsi completed his first version of theŠah Nāmah, we have three independent references to pictures of Sasanian origin; e.g. Mas'ūdī tells us that about the year 915 he saw in a history of the kings of Persia, belonging to a noble family of the city of Iṣṭahār, pictures of each of the Sasanian rulers depicted in their royal robes at the time of death; a similar volume is mentioned by a geographer as having been preserved in the castle of Shīz, which was near the site of one of the most sacred fire-temples of Sasanian times; another geographer, Ibn Ḥawqal, in 977, describes a vast building in the district of Iṣṭahār adorned with statues and pictures. These survivals of the tradition of Sasanian pictorial are doubtless comprised representations of the national legend of Persia, and must have served as models for the decoration of the room in Sultan Māimdūz's palace, which this monarch had painted for Firdawsi when the poet set to work upon the compilation of his vast epic; the kings and heroes of Iran and Turan were here depicted, with their horses and elephants and camels and all their weapons of war.²

So far as can be judged from the surviving illustrated copies of theŠah Nāmah the great Muhammadan artists seldom devoted their genius to the illustration of this work, and, with the exception of a few royal manuscripts, the task appears to have been left to artists of mediocre talents. The subject-matter of this enormous epic tends to become monotonous, with its constantly recurring episodes of single combat and of battle. The adventures of Rustam, Alexander, and Bahram Gur arouse a more personal interest, of which the painters took advantage. But the historical provenance of the various types to be found in the numerous manuscripts of theŠah Nāmah still await careful investigation; many different schools of painters are represented, and it remains to be ascertained which of their paintings can be traced back to a Sasanian source and which of them are new inventions.

Next in popular favour to theŠah Nāmah in the great mass of the poetical literature of the Persian language comes theKhamsa, or Quinter, of Nizāmī.

painters were not more frequently employed to illustrate historical writings, seeing that they had shown so much skill in the dramatic representation of feats recorded by the poets, to which the Muhammadan reader often gave the same credence as he did to more sober annals.

One of the commonest prose works containing pictures is the Marvels of Creation by Qazwini, a treatise on cosmography which has had a great vogue in the Muhammadan world and has been translated from Arabic into several languages, such as Persian, Turkish, and Urdu. It is a compendium of the natural sciences as known to the Muslims of the thirteenth century, and comprises sections on astronomy, physics, zoology, mineralogy, &c. Mixed up with much soberly recorded scientific information there are many recitals of marvels such as excited the imagination of the Middle Ages both in the West and in the East, and many strange monsters are described of which the modern scientific world knows nothing. A comparative study of the Bestiaries and other medieval representations of monsters would reveal many similarities to the Muslim illustrations to Qazwini's work, but this investigation still remains to be carried out. There can be little doubt but that the painters in Persia and other parts of the Muslim East have in several instances copied the work of Christian artists; e.g. in one picture in Professor Sarre's MS. of Qazwini are found the symbols of the four Evangelists—the angel of St. Matthew, the lion of St. Mark, the ox of St. Luke, and the eagle of St. John (Plate XVI). Some of the strange monsters—elephant-eared and dog-headed men, human beings whose trunks are supported by a single leg, and other hideous fantasies—are common to these Muhammadan MSS, and to the sculptures of medieval cathedrals, and in both instances they are probably to be traced back to the same oriental source.

Illustrated prose romances and fairy stories are common in later Persian and Indian manuscripts, but they mostly belong to a period when the art of painting in the Muhammadan world was on the decline. From the nature of the subject-matter these illustrations often tend to take on an erotic character. Indeed pictures of this kind occur in every period, and it is characteristic of the prevailing courtly character of Muhammadan painting that the earliest examples of it should belong to erotic art. The hostile attitude of the official exponents of the faith of Islam deprived the Muslim painter of that encouragement and patronage which so largely determined the development and success of Buddhist and Christian art and threw around their art of painting the protecting mantle of religion. Religious art in Islam

there certainly was, as will be shown in the next chapter, but it came into existence in spite of the condemnation of the teachers of the faith, and represents rather a spirit of artistic self-expression which refused to be suppressed than a normal outcome of the religious life of Islam. The Muslim painter, therefore, had to look to the monarch and his court for the means of livelihood, and erotic art of some kind has generally received encouragement in wealthy courts of all creeds and countries. Like his contemporaries in other lands the painter in a Muhammadan society had to consult the tastes of his patrons, and erotic art has consequently filled a large a place in the pictorial art of the Muhammadan world as it has in that of Christendom.

There may have been Muhammadan Sultans whose piety condemned such pictures, even as Louis IX would have detested the pictures which Boucher painted for Louis XIV; so similarly Firuz Shâh Taghliq would have gladly destroyed the decorations which Shâh 'Abbâs had painted in his country house at Ashraf.

The fact remains that the earliest examples of painting in the Muhammadan period that have survived to us are the frescoes of the baths of Qusayr 'Amra, which, as a pleasure house of one of the Umayyad princes, reflects the luxurious character of the majority of the Caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty. From the eighth century onwards the decoration of baths appears often to have assumed this character. For the execution of such pictures the Muslim conquerors had at the outset to employ painters from among the conquered peoples of the Roman empire, and even some classical statues seem to have found a temporary refuge from the iconoclastic zeal of the Arab conquerors in such baths, for when the Umayyad Caliph, Yazid II, in A.D. 722, gave orders for the destruction of all idols, among the statues destroyed was the so-called idol of the bath of Zabbân; the Caliph's cousin; it is thus described by a poet: "If any man bath in his heart a place for fair ladies, then let him go to the fair one in the bath of Zabbân:"

It is matchless and graceful, slim-waisted, well-proportioned,
On its bosom are two breasts."3

From the Umayyad period the only royal bath that has survived to us is that of Qusayr 'Amra; from the Abbasid period there are only those shattered fragments which the patient excavations of Professor Herzfeld have recovered from the ruins of the palace of Mutawakkil (847-861) in Sâmarra. The stucco which covered the walls of the baths in the women's

2 See p. 29.
3 This bath was probably in Alexandria (Al-Kindi, The Governors and Judges of Egypt, ed. R. Guest, p. 102).
apartments in this palace had been decorated with paintings, which appear to have been renewed whenever the dampness of the baths made a fresh coating of plaster necessary, so that as many as sixteen layers of such plaster have been found stuck together. (Plate XVII.) Hardly any complete pictures could be made out of the broken fragments, but the semi-nude figures of dancing-girls and musicians suggest that the general character of the decoration must have been much like that of Qusayr 'Amra.

For our knowledge of other examples of such baths we have to depend upon descriptions, and from the very nature of the circumstances descriptions are rare. To the period of the decline of the Abbasid dynasty belongs the story of how Mahmod of Ghazni (998–1030) came to learn from his spies that his son Mas'ud, who afterwards succeeded him, had had a pavilion built in the garden of his palace in Harat, decorated from the ceiling to the floor with paintings taken from one of those many manuals in Arabic or Persian based on the Sanskrit Kāmalātītra. Mahmod sent a special messenger with orders to inspect the pavilion and make a report; but Mas'ud, who had his own spies at his father's court, had been warned in time and set plasterers to work to cover up the objectionable pictures with a fresh coating of plaster, so that when the royal messenger arrived and broke open the door of the pavilion he found its walls bare but for some plain hangings.

From the thirteenth century we have a more detailed description of a bath in Baghdad in the palace of Sharaf ad-Din Harun, a poet and a patron of poets; he was the son of that great statesman Shams ad-Din Muhammad Juwayni, who was at the head of the administration of Persia during the reigns of three successive Mongol rulers, Hulagu, Aibak, and Ahmad, but when the last of these princes was defeated and assassinated by his nephew Arghun in 1284 Juwayni was also put to death together with his sons. The palace of Sharaf ad-Din Harun appears to have been a building of great magnificence, and the bath, containing as many as ten different rooms, was decorated with rare and costly marbles of various colours, and the water came out of pipes of silver or of silver-gilt, some of them in the shape of birds, so fashioned that as the water poured forth it produced the special note of the particular bird represented. The inner apartment of the bath was kept locked and was decorated with pictures of various forms of sexual intercourse.

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1. Ernst Herzfeld, Die Malereien von Qusayr, p. vii (Berlin, 1917).
2. To'resh-i-Bagdadi, pp. 151–9 (Calcutta, 1862).

Fuller details are available regarding the summer palaces which Shih 'Abbas (1587–1629) had erected at Ashraf early in the seventeenth century. The local legend reports that one of his sons was a laggard in love, and that the Shih ordered one of these buildings to be decorated with erotic pictures, hoping by such means to incite him to the performance of his martial duties. Such pictures were still in existence in the ruined palace of 'Imarat-i-Chashmah, which Shih 'Abbas built at Ashraf in 1612, when Sir William Ouseley visited it two centuries later; he speaks of certain rooms in which 'the plaster had been totally or partially cut out from the wall, with a design, as it would seem, of removing certain groups, the least worthy of preservation; for, from imperfect figures still visible, the subjects were evidently most offensive to modesty, but therefore adapted to the corrupt taste of Persians; or as Hanway says of the paintings which he saw in another edifice here, "such as could perhaps only a voluptuous Mahommedan".

The same writer makes a similar report on the palace of Jahannun, erected by Shih 'Abbas at Farah-bâd, twenty-six miles from Ashraf, about the same date.

'Abbas II (1642–1667) does not appear to have shared the opinions of his great namesake in these matters, judging from the account which Sir William Ouseley gives of the fate of some pictures which he saw on a bridge, built in the early part of the seventeenth century by Aliverdi Khan, at Julfa, near Isphahan; his account of them is as follows:

"Among the recesses of its battlements are those small chambers where several indecent pictures so much offended the delicacy of Abbas the second, that by his order the entrances were closed. But had it been the monarch's object to preserve public morals from contamination he should have totally effaced those vestiges of a licentious pencil; there, however, they remain; and the doorways of those chambers having been during a century filled up with brick and lime were opened a few years since at the instigation of curiosity; and such painted scenes of impurity are now disclosed in various compartments on the walls, as must have tended to corrupt the innocence of youths on their travels from England through Russia into Persia, Vol. I, p. 200 (London, 1714).
